



City of Seattle

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Department of Planning and Development
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CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Application Number: 2303354
Council File Number: 306191
Applicant Name: Weinstein Architects for Seattle Public Library
Address of Proposal: 2234 East McGraw Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Council Concept Approval to establish use for the future construction of a 8,000 square foot Public Library (Montlake Branch Library) and modification of development standards for a City Facility. Parking for 13 vehicles will be provided. Project includes demolition of three (3) residential structures. Council land use action to waive or modify development standards.

The following approvals are required:

Council Land Use Action – to waive or modify development standards and
Administrative Conditional Use Criteria for a City facility - (SMC Chapter
23.76.064)

SEPA - Environmental Determination - (SMC Chapter 25.05)

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☒ DNS** ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS
 ☐ DNS with conditions
 ☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition
 or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

** Notice of early DNS published on June 26, 2003.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

The subject site is located along 24th Avenue East at the northwest corner of the intersection with East McGraw Street. The site is bordered by single family development to the north, east and west. The zoning is Neighborhood Commercial (NC1-30) across McGraw to the south. 24th Avenue East is considered a principal arterial street.

Project Description

The proposal is to replace the existing Montlake Branch Library with a new 5,000 square foot library. There will be partially covered at-grade parking for 12 vehicles with access from 24th Avenue East.

Public Comment

No comment letters were received during the comment period which ended on July 9, 2003.

The Seattle Design Commission reviewed and commented on the design development on three occasions (21 November, 2002 (Pre-Design); 20 March 2003 (Schematic Design); 3 October 2003 (Design Development)).

The Commission recommended approval of the design development.

ANALYSIS — COUNCIL LAND USE ACTION

This proposal is subject to review by the Seattle Design Commission (SDC) because it is a City Facility. The Commission's role is to advise the project designer in an effort to foster well-designed projects that are worthy of civic project funds. The SDC reviewed the design development stage on 3 October 2003. The SDC supported the overall development proposal and program. For complete SDC actions and comments, the approved minutes from the meetings are available on the CityDesign website located at <http://www.cityofseattle.net/DPD/citydesign>.

Section 23.76.064 of the SMC includes provisions for the City Council to grant concept approval and to waive or modify applicable development standards, accessory use requirements, special use requirements or conditional use criteria for City Facilities. SMC 23.76.064, classifies this decision as a legislative action (Type V) and does not prescribe a specific set of approval criteria.

The “Libraries for All” Capital Plan approved by voters in 1998 recommends the following for the Montlake Branch:

Replace the existing building with an expanded facility to provide:

- Total program area of 5,000 square feet
- Expanded seating and book collection
- Upgraded technology services and equipment
- Adequate and fully accessible parking
- Expanded service at 48 hours per week

Seattle Public Library (SPL) has been challenged by the need to identify suitable building sites for the branch libraries that are able to accommodate development goals. Appropriate infill sites are often located in the center of a neighborhood’s urban village and difficult to find and purchase. Current library sites are often preferred since SPL already owns the site and patrons are accustomed to the location. The current site, however, cannot easily accommodate the building program because of the lot size and the programmatic goals. Therefore, SPL has purchased the project proposal lots to the north of the current library site.

In an effort to meet programmatic goals, SPL acquired new property for a new branch library. Demolition of housing and boundary expansions into the single family zones is generally not encouraged by the Land Use Code or the Comprehensive Plan. This is emphasized in the Administrative Conditional Use criteria for single family zones which limits the dispersion of

institutions and generally discourages demolition of residential structures. However, the recommendation of the libraries for all was to find a site that could accommodate the 5,000 square foot program area.

The proposed library structure in the Single Family 5000 zone does not meet several of the development standards for the zone. Libraries are a type of institution as defined in the Land Use Code. In this case, as a city facility, the proposed library is reviewed through a Council Land Use Action which allows the waiver or modification of development standards. Per SMC 23.44.022, Table A outlines the applicable development standard for institutions in single family zones which is requested as a Council approvable waiver. Only one waiver is requested. Other departures are available as Director's departures. (Table B below).

Table A:

Development Standard waiver	Required	Provided	Modification
SMC 23.44.022 E Dispersion	Not within 600 feet of another institution	Within 600 feet of a school	Requires waiver by City Council. See analysis below.
SMC 23.54.030 Site Triangle	Site Triangle 10 feet on a side	3 foot site triangle along the sidewalk	Landscaping will be low at this location to aid in visibility

Dispersion

The existing library site is within 600 feet of a school. This school is located approximately 335 feet to the west of the subject site. The topography is steep in this area and creates a sense of separation. The current location of the library is within the 600 feet of the school. Based on this rationale, the Director recommends that the dispersion criteria be waived.

Noise and Odor

Per SMC 23.44.022.H which states that the Director may condition a project to reduce the impacts associated with noise and odor impacts. No conditions are recommended.

Light and Glare

Per SMC 23.44.022.J, the Director may condition a project to reduce the light and glare impacts associated with a project. No conditions are recommended.

Parking and Loading Berth Requirements

The proposed project includes 13 parking spaces. Eight (8) of the parking spaces are located in an at-grade garage. Therefore, all of the Code parking requirements have been satisfied. Additionally, bicycle parking will be provided on-site and within the below grade garage.

The site is served moderately well by transit with bus routes operating along 24th Avenue. There is a bus stop one block south on 24th Avenue.

The estimated parking demand generated by the proposed project is not considered adverse and the parking impacts require no further mitigation.

Transportation Plan

The trip generation was estimated using the fitted rate for Land Use Code 590 (Library), found in the Institution of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation Manual, 6th Edition, 1997. The fitted

rate was chosen over the average rate because it is more conservative. Using the proposed 5,000 square feet of library space, this rate yields 40 PM peak hour trips. The intersection of East McGraw Street and 24th Avenue East would continue to operate at LOS A, which reflects delays of less than 10 seconds per vehicle.

The library parking will be accessed along 24th Avenue East about 125 feet north of the McGraw intersection. Two residential driveways will be removed. Based on the small traffic volumes generated by the library, the moderate and evenly distributed volumes on 24th Avenue East and the location of the library driveway it is concluded that this mid block driveway can be operated safely. A January 2003 of library patrons show that approximately 45% of the library's patrons use a mode of travel other than traveling alone in a car. Metro Bus Route 43 serves this area with connections to local and regional transit.

This anticipated traffic increase is negligible and is not expected to adversely impact traffic operations; therefore no traffic mitigation is necessary.

Director's Departures

In this proposal, the project requests modification of yard setbacks and large parking stall quantity standards. The relief necessary is available through a Director's departure request. The following table describes the requested modifications.

Table B:

Standard	Required	Provided	Modification
SMC 23.44.022 Front Yard	20 ft.	5 ft.	Proposed 5 ft front yard is directly across from the NC-1 zone to the south. The setback along 24 th Avenue will still be about 17 feet.
SMC 23.44.022 West Side Yard	10 ft.	6 ft.	Applies to about 40 linear feet of the structure which is single story and residential in scale. The remaining length has a setback of 30 feet.

Setbacks

SPL is requesting modifications from the front and side yard requirements in SF5000 zones. The required front yard is 20 feet and the proposal is for 5 feet in order to accommodate the programmatic needs of the library. The required west side yard is 10 feet and the proposal is for a 6 foot setback for 40 linear feet of the side yard length. The remaining length, approximately 30 feet will have a 30 foot setback. Single story construction, design features and landscaping will minimize the appearance of bulk.

The modifications will primarily impact the abutting single family residential property to the west of the library site.

The reduction of the side yard allows the administrative functions to be pushed away from the center of the building. The result is a larger public reading room, more logical and clear interior circulation, and better scaled public exterior spaces on the other side of the building where entries and gathering spaces occur.

Based on this information DPD recommends that both the front yard and side yard modifications be granted.

RECOMMENDED DECISION - COUNCIL CONCEPT APPROVAL

DPD recommends approval of the proposed library design with the requested modifications and waivers as described in Table A council waiver and Table B Director's departures.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS - COUNCIL CONCEPT APPROVAL

See conditions at the end of this document.

ANALYSIS – SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant signed on May 30, 2003 and annotated by the Department. The information in the checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant, project plans, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, and certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced, may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The Overview Policy states, in part, "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation subject to the limitations set forth. Unless otherwise specified in the Policies for Specific Elements of the Environment (SMC Section 25.05.675), denial or mitigation of a project based on adverse environmental impacts shall be permitted only under the following circumstances:...". The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665D1 through D7) and Specific Elements of the Environment (SMC Section 25.05.675) provide the circumstances in which denial or mitigation of a project can take place.

Short-term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code regulates site excavation for foundation purposes and requires that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of construction. The Street Use Ordinance requires debris to be removed from the street right of way, and regulates obstruction of the sidewalk. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures and life safety issues. Finally, the Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the city.

Most short-term impacts are expected to be minor. Compliance with the above applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment. However, impacts associated with air quality, construction traffic and noise warrant further discussion.

Air Quality

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality and will require permits for removal of asbestos or other hazardous substances during demolition. The applicant will perform an environmental site assessment to identify all hazardous materials requiring abatement and is required to obtain permits from PSCAA to ensure proper handling and disposal these materials. The permit standards and regulations administered by PSCAA will sufficiently mitigate any adverse impacts to air quality; therefore no further mitigation is recommended pursuant to SEPA 25.05.675A.

Construction: Traffic

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675B) allow the reviewing agency to mitigate impacts associated with construction activities.

Construction activities are expected to affect the surrounding area. Impacts to traffic and roads are expected from truck trips during excavation and construction activities. The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675B) allows the reviewing agency to mitigate impacts associated with transportation during construction. The construction activities will require the removal of material from site and can be expected to generate truck trips to and from the site. In addition, delivery of concrete and other materials to the site will generate truck trips. As a result of these truck trips, an adverse impact to existing traffic will be introduced to the surrounding street system, which is unmitigated by existing codes and regulations.

It is expected that grading will be approximately 1,000 cubic yards. A single-loaded truck will hold approximately 10 cubic yards of material. This would require approximately 100 single-loaded truckloads to remove the estimated material. Existing City code (SMC 11.62) requires truck activities to use arterial streets to the greatest extent possible.

For the removal and disposal of the spoil materials, the Code (SMC 11.74) provides that material hauled in trucks not be spilled during transport. The City requires that a minimum of one foot of “freeboard” (area from level of material to the top of the truck container) be provided in loaded uncovered trucks which minimizes the amount of spilled material and dust from the truck bed en route to or from a site.

The Street Use Ordinance requires sweeping or watering streets to suppress dust, on-site washing of truck tires, removal of debris, and regulates obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way. This ordinance provides adequate mitigation for transportation impacts; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Noise

The project is expected to generate noise during demolition, grading and construction. These impacts would be especially adverse in the early morning, in the evening, and on weekends. The surrounding properties to the east, south and north are developed with single family homes and will be impacted by construction noise. Pursuant to SEPA policy, it is recommended that construction activity be prohibited after 6:00 p.m. on non-holiday weekdays. No construction activity should be allowed on other days. This condition should be modifiable by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature or to permit low noise exterior work (e.g., installation of

landscaping). Low noise interior work should be allowed after the exterior of the structure is enclosed, subject to the limitations of the Noise Ordinance.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including; increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic; increased parking demand; increased airborne emissions from additional traffic; increased ambient noise due to increased human activity; increased bulk and scale on the site, increased demand for public services and utilities, increased energy consumption, and increased light and glare.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding. The City Energy Code will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows. The Seattle Building Code provides for life safety issues in general. The Land Use Code controls building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long term impacts. The traffic and parking impacts are discussed at the beginning of this document, under the conditional use section. The height, bulk and scale and impacts require further discussion.

Height, Bulk and Scale

The SEPA Height, Bulk and Scale Policy (Section 25.06.675.G., SMC) states that *“the height, bulk and scale of development projects should be reasonably compatible with the general character of development anticipated by...section C of land use element of the Seattle comprehensive plan regarding the System of Land Use Regulation...for the area in which they are located, and to provide for a reasonable transition between areas of less intensive zoning and more intensive zoning.”*

This development is not anticipated by the code since the project is seeking council conditional use with modifications to the dispersion requirements, quantity of large parking stalls, and yard standards prescribed in the Single Family 5000 zone. Impacts from height, bulk and scale will primarily affect property to the west and north of the subject site. The slope up to the west and the parking and access “open space” will help mitigate impacts. Property lines on the east and south abut street rights-of-way so perception of height, bulk and scale is expected to be alleviated by this separation. Mitigation is not warranted.

The site will be attractively landscaped, constructed with attractive durable finish materials and include a sufficient setback area to mitigate adverse impacts associated with height, bulk and scale. These design features are discussed in further detail in the Council Land Use Action analysis. No mitigation of height, bulk and scale impacts is recommended pursuant to this SEPA policy (SMC 25.06.675.G).

Other Impacts

The other impacts such as but not limited to, increased ambient noise, increased pedestrian traffic and increased demand on public services and utilities are mitigated by codes and are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

DECISION - SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C)
- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C)

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS - COUNCIL CONCEPT APPROVAL

For the Life of the Project

1. All of the vegetation shown on the landscaping plan shall be maintained as depicted in the plans.
2. Low level lighting shall be maintained and not increased in height or wattage.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS - SEPA

Prior to Issuance of Demolition Permit

3. A copy of applicable PSCAA permits shall be submitted to DPD.

During Construction

4. The following condition to be enforced during construction shall be posted at the site in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right-of-way. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans. The placards shall be laminated with clear plastic or other weatherproofing material and shall remain in place for the duration of construction.
5. Construction activity is prohibited after 6 p.m. on non holiday weekdays. Construction activity is not allowed on other days. This condition may be modified by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature or to permit low noise exterior work (e.g., installation of landscaping) after approval from the DPD planner. Low noise interior work is allowed after the exterior of the structure is enclosed, subject to the limitations of the Noise Ordinance.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: April 15, 2004
Holly J. Godard
Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development